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General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

93rd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 30 June 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 116, 118, 121, 132 to 136, 138 to 149, 157 and 117.

I request Mr. Patrick Chuasoto, Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, to introduce, in one intervention, the reports of the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Chuasoto (Philippines), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour today to introduce to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee that contain recommendations on issues that required action during the second part of the resumed sixty-third session.

In the course of the second part of the resumed session, which took place between 11 May and 25 June 2009, the Fifth Committee held 15 formal meetings and numerous informal meetings and informal informal consultations. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/233, of 23 December 1994, the second part of the resumed session of the Fifth Committee was devoted primarily to considering the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping missions and associated peacekeeping issues. The Committee considered the financing of 18 peacekeeping missions, related peacekeeping items and other issues.

On sub-item (b), entitled "United Nations peacekeeping operations", of agenda item 116, entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors", the Committee, in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/63/637/Add.1, recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which the Committee adopted without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 118, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009", in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/63/648/Add.6, the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council", which the Committee adopted without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 121, entitled "Pattern of conferences", the Committee, in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/63/638/Add.1, recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Timely submission of documents", which the Committee adopted without a vote.

In its report under agenda item 132, entitled "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations", which is contained in document A/63/894, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of three draft resolutions and one oral draft decision; draft

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resolution I, entitled "Rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries"; draft resolution II, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy"; draft resolution III, entitled "Support account for peacekeeping operations"; and the oral draft decision entitled "Closed peacekeeping missions". All those drafts were adopted without a vote.

With regard to the draft proposals on the financing of peacekeeping operations, I should like to inform the General Assembly that, with the exception of the draft resolution on sub-item (b) of agenda item 144, entitled "United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon", the Fifth Committee adopted all the draft proposals without a vote.

Reports of the Fifth Committee are presented under the following agenda items: 133, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi"; 134, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire"; 135, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus"; 136, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo"; 138, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste"; 139, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea"; 140, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia"; 141, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti"; 142, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo"; 143, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Liberia"; 144, entitled "Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East", including sub-item (a), entitled "United Nations Disengagement Observer Force"; 145, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone"; 146, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan"; 147, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara"; 148, entitled "Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur"; 149, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad", and 157, entitled "Financing of activities arising from Security Council resolution 1863 (2009)".

With regard to sub-item (b) of agenda item 144, entitled "United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/63/905. The Committee decided to retain the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 4, 5 and 15 by a single recorded vote of 74 in favour, 5 against and 45 abstentions. In paragraph 12 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution as a whole, which was adopted by the Committee in a recorded vote of 125 in favour, 2 against and no abstentions.

Under agenda item 117, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the Committee had before it a draft decision entitled "Questions deferred for future consideration", which the Committee also adopted without a vote and which is before the Assembly in paragraph 5 of document A/63/649/Add.2.

Before I conclude, allow me once again to thank delegations for their spirit of cooperation and flexibility in the conduct of the complex negotiations during this very challenging second part of the resumed session. I take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Gábor Brodi, Chairman of the Fifth Committee, for his stewardship of the Committee. I would also like to thank my fellow Bureau members, Ambassador Mohamed Abdelmannan, Mr. Olivio Fermin and Mr. Henric Rasbrant, for their camaraderie and friendship, which made the difficult work tolerable in the end.

On behalf of all of us, I would like to express the Committee's profound gratitude to all the representatives of the Secretariat who toiled with us during the long and tiring negotiations, in particular those who handle peacekeeping finance issues. I also wish especially to acknowledge the secretariat of the Fifth Committee for its strenuous efforts in servicing the Committee during this extended session. Commendations are in order for Mr. Movses Abelian, acting head of the Fifth Committee secretariat, Mr. Wiryanto Sumitro, his very able and hardworking deputy, Ms. Katherine Durnin, Mr. Paul Dysenchuk, Mr. Marc Latrique and Ms. Ana Burgi.

Last but not the least, I should also like to extend our thanks to Ms. Susan McLurg, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, whose cooperation during trying times was greatly appreciated by the Bureau. To all other officials with whom I have had the privilege and honour of

working during this historic resumed session I extend my warmest regards and best wishes.

I would like to end my statement by quoting a Chinese proverb that provides us with some words of wisdom to guide the Committee in its future work. By scrambling for something, both parties look bad; by giving up something, both parties win. I wish all members a nice summer vacation.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee for his statement.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Second Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance. That means that where recorded votes or separate votes were taken, we will do the same. I also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/637/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/246 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 116.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/648/Add.6)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/283).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda item 121 (*continued*)

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/638/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Timely submission of documents". The Fifth

Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/284).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 121.

Agenda item 132

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/894)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it three draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 14 of its report and a draft decision recommended by the Committee in paragraph 15 of the same report. We will now take a decision on draft resolutions I to III and on the one draft decision.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 63/285).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Draft resolution II is entitled "Financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 63/286).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Draft resolution III is entitled "Support account for peacekeeping operations". The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 63/287).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft decision is entitled "Closed peacekeeping missions". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 132.

Agenda item 133

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/895)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/288).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 133.

Agenda item 134

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/896)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/289).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda item 135

Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/897)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/290).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 135.

Agenda item 136

Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/898)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/291).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 138

Financing of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/899)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/292).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 138.

Agenda item 139 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/646/Add.2)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/257 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 139.

Agenda item 140

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/900)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/293).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 141

Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/901)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/294).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 141.

Agenda item 142

Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/902)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/295).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia, who wishes to speak in explanation of position following the adoption of resolution 63/295.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): I would like to express the satisfaction of Serbia at the creation of three professional positions in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as stipulated by paragraph 11 of resolution 63/295. Those positions are intended to ensure coordination and cooperation between the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), in line with the mandate established by the Security Council and, in particular, as part of the status-neutral framework of the Council's resolution 1244 (1999).

I wish to point out that the creation of those three positions will fill the void in the matter of coordination and cooperation between the two Missions, as the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/803) did not specify an adequate mechanism, staffing and resources, but referred to this issue only in abstract terms. We therefore expect the newly created positions to have a clear and well-defined role, in particular with regard to coordination pertaining to the three core functions of EULEX: policing, justice and customs.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 142.

Agenda item 143

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/903)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/296).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 143.

Agenda item 144

Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/904)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/297).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 144.

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/905)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 12 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon". A single separate vote has been requested on the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 4, 5 and 19 of the draft resolution. Is there any objection to that request? There is none.

I shall now put to the vote the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 4, 5 and 19, on which a single separate and recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 4, 5 and 19 of the draft resolution were retained by 75 votes to 6, with 46 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Colombia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution as a whole. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco,

Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

The draft resolution as a whole was adopted by 134 votes to 2 (resolution 63/298).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Colombia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Republic of Tanzania advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Ali (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Having joined the consensus on resolution 63/297, on the financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, my delegation voted in favour of resolution 63/298, on the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, by virtue of the often-reaffirmed principle that the responsibility for financing that Force should be borne by Israel, the occupying Power, which was the reason for the mission's establishment. That principle is in accordance with the main principles of resolution 1874 (S-IV) of 27 June 1963.

Mrs. Eilon Shahar (Israel): At the outset, I wish to convey Israel's full support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which participates in a critical mission to implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) in an effort to stabilize our region.

However, I wish to reiterate Israel's firm position on resolution 63/298, given that it lacks the necessary impartiality and any precedent. Regrettably, this resolution is a repetition of an annual political manoeuvre by some Member States. Each year, certain Member States continue to promote a hateful political agenda that seeks to pin both the blame for and the cost of the unfortunate incident that took place in Qana, Lebanon, squarely on Israel. Such diplomatic manipulation takes place while the world witnesses the rearmament of the terrorist organization, Hizbullah, that brought about the conflict in Lebanon during the 1990s and in 2006.

Even this past December and January, Israel was attacked by rockets from Lebanon. Those attacks, which, incidentally, targeted civilians, are a clear violation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and threaten the stability and security of the people of Israel and the entire region. Additional unlaunched rockets were discovered in southern Lebanon as well.

The territory of Lebanon also continues to witness Hizbullah smuggling and building sophisticated and deadly terrorist infrastructure as it embeds itself in the civilian population and near United Nations facilities. Member States that acquiesce in these matters must stand firm in the face of those who actively encourage and abet terrorism and who seek to hijack this resolution and use it to promote their politicized objectives.

Israel wishes to remind members here today that Fifth Committee draft resolutions should be technical in nature. For the sake of peace and peacekeeping in our region, the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly must reject this sort of politicization, which only undermines the budgetary and administrative issues related to United Nations peacekeeping that we are gathered here to address.

Ms. Ziade (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Our delegation explained its position on the draft resolution on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) before the Fifth Committee. We did not wish to take the floor again, but we find ourselves obliged to do so in order to clarify a number of issues.

Our delegation reaffirms that the Lebanese Government upholds and fully supports the activities carried out by UNIFIL in cooperation with the Lebanese army in southern Lebanon in order to avoid any possibility of recurrent and renewed Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

Concerning the financing of UNIFIL, our delegation considers that the principle of collective responsibility for the cost of peacekeeping operations does not contradict the general principle of international law regarding the responsibility of individual States for their individual wrongdoing in international affairs. The events that took place in Qana in 1996 were surely one such wrongdoing perpetrated by Israel, and the international community must hold it fully responsible for that. This includes compensation for material damage caused by such activities. Today, Israel has yet to comply with the 16 General Assembly resolutions calling upon Israel to pay the compensation it owes as a result of its 1996 bombardment of the United Nations facilities in Qana.

UNIFIL does indeed perform an important duty in southern Lebanon, but to date it is still unable to fully carry out its tasks because of Israel's continued, daily violations of Lebanese airspace, as described by the Secretary-General in his reports on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). Israel also persists in its occupation of the northern part of the village of Ghajar, despite the clarity of resolution 1701 (2006) and despite all international resolutions and reports on this matter.

Our delegation has never wanted to politicize draft resolutions of a financial nature under discussion in the Fifth Committee, and ours was not the delegation politicizing this matter. Our delegation is dealing with issues concerning the National Dialogue on reconciliation currently under way in Lebanon. The delegation responsible for this politicization is the one that is trying to interfere in our internal affairs. The resolution we have just adopted is aimed at providing financial and administrative support to allow UNIFIL to carry out its tasks, which is one of the Lebanese Government's priorities.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 144.

Agenda item 145

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/906)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/299).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 145.

Agenda item 146 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/787/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/273 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 146.

Agenda item 147

Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/907)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/300).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 147.

Agenda item 148 (*continued*)

Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/647/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/258 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 148.

Agenda item 149 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/788/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/274 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 149.

Agenda item 157 (*continued*)

Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 1863 (2009)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/789/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/275 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 157.

Agenda item 117 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/649/Add.2)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report. We will now take action on the draft decision entitled "Questions deferred for future consideration". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 117. The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Fifth Committee.

I shall now suspend the meeting as we await the arrival of the President of the Republic of Honduras.

The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 12.45 p.m. with the President in the Chair.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Draft resolution (A/63/L.74)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will first proceed to take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.74, after which we shall hear an address by His Excellency Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, President of the Republic of Honduras.

I now give the floor to the representative of Honduras who will introduce draft resolution A/63/L.74.

Mr. Reina Idiaquez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to address the Assembly to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.74 on behalf of the following countries, which have sponsored the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Syrian Arab Republic, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The draft resolution is the object of consensus in the Assembly, with a view to its adoption by acclamation.

A number of revisions have been made to the text. First, a final phrase has been added to paragraph 2: after the word "Honduras", the following phrase should be inserted: "in order for him to fulfil the mandate for which he was democratically elected by the Honduran people".

Paragraph 3 should now read as follows:

"Decides to call firmly and unequivocally upon all States to recognize no Government other than that of the Constitutional President, Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales".

A new paragraph 4 will be added, which reads as follows:

"Expresses its firm support for the regional efforts being undertaken pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations to resolve the political crisis in Honduras".

It is my hope that the Assembly will adopt draft resolution A/63/L.74, as orally revised by acclamation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Honduras has been asked to read out the full text of the draft resolution on which the General Assembly will take action.

Mr. Reina Idiaquez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Having read out only the revisions to the document originally submitted, I shall now read out the entire text, incorporating the revisions that I read out previously. The draft resolution is entitled: "Situation in Honduras: democracy breakdown".

"The General Assembly,

"Deeply concerned by the coup d'état that took place in the Republic of Honduras on 28 June 2009,

"Deeply concerned also by the acts of violence against diplomatic personnel and accredited officials in the Republic of Honduras in violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations,

"Recalling the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and conventions on international peace and security,

"Gravely concerned by the breakdown in the constitutional and democratic order that has led to the endangerment of security, democracy and the rule of law, which has jeopardized the security of Honduran and foreign citizens,

"Condemns the coup d'état in the Republic of Honduras that has interrupted the democratic and constitutional order and the legitimate exercise of power in Honduras, and resulted in the removal of the democratically elected President of that country, Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales,

"Demands the immediate and unconditional restoration of the legitimate and Constitutional Government of the President of the Republic of Honduras, Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, and of the legally constituted authority in Honduras, in order for him to fulfil the mandate for which he was democratically elected by the Honduran people,

"Decides to call firmly and unequivocally upon all States to recognize no Government other than that of the Constitutional President, Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales,

"Expresses its full support for the regional efforts being undertaken pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations to resolve the political crisis in Honduras,

"Requests the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly in a timely manner with regard to the evolving situation in that country."

Again, I hope that the Assembly will adopt the draft resolution, as orally revised, by acclamation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Honduras for reading out the text of this truly important and historic draft resolution.

Copies of the text of the oral revisions will be circulated in the General Assembly Hall.

The General Assembly will now consider draft resolution A/63/L.74, as orally revised. In view of the desire of members to dispose of this item expeditiously, I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to consider draft resolution A/63/L.74. In that connection, since the draft resolution was only circulated this morning, it will be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure which reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objections, I will take it that the General Assembly agrees with this proposal. It is so decided.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/63/L.74, entitled "Situation in Honduras: democracy breakdown", as orally revised. I should like to announce that the following countries have now joined the list of sponsors: Barbados, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Cape Verde, Colombia, Guyana and the United States of America.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.74, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/63/L.74, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 63/301).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Honduras.

Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, constitutional President of the Republic of Honduras, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Zelaya Rosales (*spoke in Spanish*): The resolution that the General Assembly has just adopted unanimously, with the affirmative vote of all countries members of the Assembly, strongly bolsters the dignity of the peoples of Honduras and of the rest of the world, encouraging them to continue fighting for the sole principles asserted by the Charter of the United Nations and international human rights agreements, and for the fundamental values of humanity, namely, the right to life, freedom, justice and individual and collective dignity, as well as the right to citizen participation. Those principles are so important at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a time when challenges and conditions are becoming increasingly complex, but also when we have greater strength, greater awareness and more instruments to respond to problems and find solutions — which, like today's world, are increasingly global and in which we are all committed to participating.

This resolution is historic and significant, and it empowers every last citizen of the world to fight for these great conquests of humankind. There are some who scorn those conquests. They believe that the use of force and violence should continue to prevail over the peace and harmony advocated by the United Nations. We have not the slightest doubt that always advocating the common good and always appealing to our highest wishes are the guiding principles so that we can attain the objective of a better world, for which we are all committed to fight.

In defence of ourselves, our children and future generations, the United Nations, along with nearly all organizations of the Americas, have adopted a resolution on this matter. Those organizations include the Organization of American States, which acted unanimously; the Caribbean Community, the organization of the countries of the Caribbean, many of which are great friends of Honduras; and the countries of the Union of South American Nations, which also unanimously condemned the barbarity and regression that a small faction of usurpers has sought to impose on our country. The Rio Group, which brings together all Latin American countries, yesterday adopted such a resolution. At a significant meeting with observer States yesterday, the countries affiliated with the bloc of Central American countries — Guatemala,

El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic — also adopted such a resolution, expressing condemnation and rejection, and calling for respect for the democratic decisions taken in Honduras.

Also at the forefront of these efforts is the organization of Central American, South American and Caribbean countries called the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA). In addition, Mesoamerica — which includes Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and Colombia — has also officially expressed itself in the same vein, in a most able manner.

Europe, through the presidency of the European Union, the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and His Majesty the King, have expressed to us the same forward-looking positions with regard to any act of aggression attacking democracy and the sovereign will of the people.

Today, with this decision, which joins those taken by the countries of the Americas, we have not only ratified what we had already declared, but we have sent a signal of what the future must hold for our societies and for humanity. All countries of the Americas without exception have expressed themselves with dignity, loudly and clearly with regard to the atrocious acts that occurred on Sunday, 28 June 2009.

Starting with the United States, with emphatic resolutions along the same lines, all the dignitaries and ministers of the Americas paid me the honour of speaking to me on that day, as they were completely outraged by the usurpers of power in Honduras.

We have received calls from President Michelle Bachelet of Chile; President Cristina Kirchner of Argentina; President Tabaré of Uruguay; President Fernando Lugo of Paraguay; President Lula of Brazil; President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia, who was in Washington, D.C., the day after the events in Honduras that were so tragic for the democracies of the world; and President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa of Mexico. The latter chaired yesterday's Managua meeting of the Rio Group, which included all countries members of the Group. That emergency meeting was convened with the express purpose of presenting the Group's views on the swipe at democracy that took place on 28 June in Honduras.

We also heard from all the Central American Presidents: President Mauricio Funes of El Salvador; President Alvaro Colom of Guatemala; and President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, who extended his hospitality to me on the day when I was practically thrown out of an aeroplane at the San José airport at 6.30 on the morning of the coup d'état in Honduras.

We heard from President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, who was the host of the Central American Integration System (SICA) meeting; President Martín Torrijos of Panama, who also participated directly in all of these events; and President Rafael Correa of Ecuador, who travelled to Managua with the single aim of standing with the democracies of the world, because fighting for democracy is not the work of a single country or a single people. When one defends a country or a people, one is also defending all countries and all of humanity.

We heard from President Hugo Chávez Frías of Venezuela, who was engaged from the very outset, when it was first announced that this conspiracy, this plot against Honduran democracy was being planned. This was made known nearly a week ahead of time, as there were already obvious signs that the principles of dictatorship were at work, that preparations were being carried out and that this plot — which resulted in a bloody coup d'état — was being pushed ahead.

We heard from President Evo Morales of Bolivia, who undertook, on behalf of the indigenous peoples of the world, to make known the voices of protest and the prevailing sense of deep unease. Indeed, all Presidents have moments of weakness when we are in office, and we all feel undermined at certain times. Many times these threats are only threats. But when, through the use of force and the use of bayonets, they become reality, this means that we, in this twenty-first-century world, have not yet made enough progress.

The world is becoming increasingly aware that we cannot use violence to resolve problems that can be resolved peacefully and legally. We have the necessary instruments at the international level and at the national level in all of our countries, in our laws and Constitutions, to engage in dialogue and seek to resolve, through legal institutions, any kind of problem that could bring about a shortcoming, a crime or any type of activity that could undermine our country.

I would like to recognize all the Presidents of the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM),

whom I will not name because their English names are difficult for me to pronounce. I would, however, like to mention in passing President Raúl Castro, who was with us in Havana. For the past 27 years he had not visited Central America, but he was with us yesterday, condemning this outrage perpetrated by such a crude military group. That group was doing nothing more than establishing an elite standing in the way of change and transformation, as has always been the way of the world. There has always been a conservative group wishing to keep everything the way it is, to maintain the status quo and to keep the establishment inviolable.

There will always be those who fight for change, and such change comes with a cost. Nothing comes free of charge for the peoples of the world who are fighting to find a place for themselves, to gain rights and to develop instruments to defend those rights. The United Nations is one such instrument, which upholds democracy and freedom. Today, I would like to applaud this Organization, which is the guarantor of democracy in the world. I am indebted to this Organization and I would like to express my thanks. I thank all members, and I thank you, Mr. President.

A number of charges have been levelled against me in Honduras, but nobody has put me on trial. Nobody has called me to the stand to defend myself. Nobody has told me what my crime is. Nobody has indicated what my error is. No accusations have been made by any judge. I assumed the presidency on 27 January 2006, after a very tough election was held in 2005. I had a margin of 3 to 5 per cent over my rival, who was from the incumbent Government, while I was from the opposition.

We have launched a new era in our country, devoted to highly democratic, social and peaceful principles with one single emblem — that of citizen participation. This is an assembly, and a nation is an assembly. Participation must be an assembly. Participation is not a group of elites issuing laws or a group of politicians with particular interests or who defend only certain interests of the ruling leadership. Only citizen participation in the assembly gives democracy transparency, which is what it needs.

I had thought that the twenty-first century would be a time for strengthening democracy. I never imagined that we would have to fight for it once again, as we did in the primitive Stone Age, nor did it cross my mind that such things could happen. I believed that when I spoke here at the United Nations three years in a row, denouncing national and regional deficiencies at the economic level — such as those revealed in recent months — and with respect to the long-standing requirement for democratic participation in order to improve democratic systems within our countries and in international bodies; when I came here to condemn the unjust trade among the various regions of the world; when we came seeking genuine improvements in trade conditions in order to redress the asymmetries of the small countries of Oceania, Africa or Latin America versus the great Powers of the world, I never thought that I was committing a crime. I never thought that my words in defence of the human rights of emigrants here would be considered by the Honduran elite as an attack on the system of privileges that they upheld. I was simply exercising a human right — the freedom of thought, expression and conscience.

I never thought that increasing the minimum wage of workers to the cost of living in Honduras would be seen by the proud elites of the country as an attack on economic development. I only asked the Ministry of Labour to tell me what the cost of living in Honduras was. They told me that the cost of living was about $230 for food alone, not including transportation, rent, or public services. They told me that the cost of living to support an individual was $230. Thus, no person should be contracted for less than that amount, because if a family contracts for less, it is not going to be able to eat, go to school or be healthy. At least, let us give it food. I immediately received 180 petitions from the country's most conservative circles because the workers were being given food.

As a dignitary of a nation, it is the least that I can do. I do not deny that I have struggled vigorously through the media for the freedom of the press in Honduras. If a report has been authorized by the State, we must enjoy the right of reply that has been categorically denied. I have struggled for freedom of information, for if there is a fact, let it be published and subsequently commented on, but let it not be manipulated in a way that is harmful. Facts are constantly being distorted in a treacherous, manipulative way. Even so, I have summarily respected that right. Although they lie and manipulate, we have been incapable of touching even one member of those organizations that have such a terrible impact on society because they manipulate thought, which is the foundation of the human presence on this Earth.

Thought is the only thing that distinguishes us from other beings, so it must be respected.

As a great French personality once said, I may not agree with what you say, but I would give my life for your right to speak. Well, we, too, have accepted such flaws, but we have condemned them in all forums. For three years, I have waged a brutal attack to repudiate absolutely everything that is being done in the country. I do not deny that I am pleased to say that, when I entered office, 6 of every 10 Hondurans were living in poverty, and had been for decades and centuries. In my first two years, we succeeded in reducing the level of extreme poverty by 10 per cent with social programmes, achieving economic growth in the private sector; we grew by 7 per cent in two years. That, together with all the social programmes that we established nationally, reduced poverty.

We did not know that that was a crime. The problems began because some people make a living on the rhetoric of poverty and, if poverty is reduced, they worry because they have nothing to talk about. We did not know that we would upset many people by working directly for the poor by raising the minimum wage, as I mentioned, or by raising money to feed the poor. We set up programmes directly geared to their needs. They said that we should not give them money, because that makes them idle loafers. But they were dying of hunger; there were 2 million people who ate only once every two or three days and whose malnourished children did not go to school. I had to divert money from a bridge and give it to the poor.

But they said that I was a populist, that I was becoming a Communist and ruining the country. In Honduras, there is much injustice, and injustice arises more than anything from inequality and laws that make human beings unequal. Human beings are born unequal. Small and large nations are unequal. Some have everything and others have very little. I do not know who did the distribution. When I was born, the world was thus. But it is understood that systems, organizations of countries and international organizations exist to reduce those inequalities, not to intensify them.

However, it happens that in Honduras, most of the laws, all of which I have respected, intensify those inequalities, perpetuate them and set them in everlasting stone. I condemned that state of affairs and submitted draft laws to Congress that have been shelved, but it would seem that such acts are criminal. For example, one law languished before Congress for eight months, which is why there was bad blood between us. I submitted a bill to make it mandatory for the employers of domestic workers — of whom there are half a million and possibly almost a million — to register them with the social security so that they and their children had the right to health care. It stayed before Congress for eight months, and they say that registering domestic workers in the social security system is confronting Congress.

That is why we are in this situation today. To make a long story short, I believe that the Honduran people have the right to participate in their democracy, not just to elect men and women who, when they take up their posts, sell out to special interests. Not all of them do so. There are some good and competent people, but many take up their posts and betray those who elected them — the people. They begin to merge with the elite, the group of the privileged.

The Honduran people have the right to speak out on the economy, social progress and development. To our surprise, this past week, Congress enacted a plebiscite and referendum law.

That law stipulates that the referendum process may be involved in Honduras for any reason except questions involving budgetary, tax, fiscal or economic matters or international treaties, or social problems. what, then, was the point of approving the referendum law? Was it simply to be used to ask whether it is day or night, or whether one is hot or cold? I had hoped at the time to act according to the law — the very first law adopted by my Government on the first day we came to power. On the day I came to power I told Congress that if the law was not in effect by evening then in the morning I would be unable to assume my functions, because that instrument was necessary in order to govern.

Certainly Congress made changes to the law that night, and I was sworn in at the national stadium the next day. The law on the participation of citizens stipulates that the citizens of Honduras have the right to request the Government to examine questions of general interest that involve or affect them.

Pursuant to the law, I received 400,000 requests from individuals who asked to be consulted on possible constitutional reforms in the country — reforms which I cannot carry out because they will extend beyond my

[illegible] mandate. I swore to discharge my mandate by 27 January next year, and I remain President of Honduras until that day, even if that group does not recognize me.

I applied that law and responded to those requests, and began the process of launching a poll to seek the opinions of the Honduran people; that, too, was considered a crime. The results of the poll would not have been binding. The survey is similar to those that professional polling companies such as Gallup and the Arturo Coralles company have carried out in my country. Such surveys are carried out to take the public temperature, to gauge trends and find out what people are thinking.

The poll was not binding, State-sanctioned or coercive. Although it was based on the law, a judge declared it illegal. His arm was twisted to do so because the plot was already under way. A judge cannot repeal a law; only Congress can do that. That is democracy and the law complements it by guaranteeing human rights. All the constitutions of the world, in all civilized societies including the United States, always contain an article indicating that no law, mandate or resolution can undermine the guarantees that a constitution grants to the citizens of that country. Those guarantees are an inherent part of our natural rights because people have shed blood for centuries to make them the law and no one can change them. The United States Congress cannot change the fundamental rights of the citizens of that country. No Congress — much less a lower court judge, who does not want to have to answer to his superiors — can declare a civic survey illegal. He cannot undermine our rights or equivocate with our constitutional guarantees, which is illegal. In this instance, that decision was part and parcel of the coup d'etat.

By order of a judge, I was arrested and violently expelled from my country. The armed forces rose up and kept the country in a state of paralysis for nearly three days. Buses carrying passengers have been fired upon. As of yesterday, some 160 people had been injured and arrested on the street. Government ministers have been arrested and sent into exile. As of yesterday 140 people had been beaten and injured. The people have taken to the streets. The workers have declared a general strike that has paralysed business; transportation has been voluntarily shut down; taxi drivers have shut down the city; teachers have stayed home and declared a general strike until rule of law for which they voted and in which they believe is restored.

The airports have been taken over by the military. The radio stations are all controlled by camouflaged military personnel and only broadcast music or issues of no importance, remaining silent on the situation. The country is in a state of shock. A crime against humanity has been publicly committed in Honduras — a crime that all reject no matter where they come from. Whenever brute force prevails over reason, humankind returns to its primeval state. Men return to their primitive lives in caves and the law of the jungle, whereby everything is decided by force.

Today I have responded to the invitation of the Assembly and feel ever more deeply committed to humankind. I do not believe that man is his own worst enemy. It is true that we struggle and compete among ourselves, but I believe in the Christian credo that all men are brothers. We must not lose sight of the sacred character of each person. There are, however, those who seek to awaken the wickedness, villainy and perversity that lie within each individual, and those people must not go unpunished. They must be firmly sanctioned to ensure that such acts are not repeated anywhere in the world.

Last Sunday, 15,000 cardboard boxes were distributed to collect the polling slips from the voluntary public survey. Such a survey requires a massive effort in Honduras. We hoped to reach 1.5 million individuals, but there are no telephones or post offices in the rural areas of Honduras, as there are perhaps in Sweden and Switzerland. If I were in Stockholm, I could poll by telephone or post, but in Honduras there are remote areas, small villages and hamlets that are difficult to reach in the sparsely populated countryside, where people lack access even to written means of communication. How were we to survey their opinions when the armed forces refused to distribute the material necessary for the survey? They control all the logistics, as they have for the past 30 years. They refused to do so and rose up. So we said we would not carry out the poll.

At the same time, however, the people themselves rose up — workers, union members, farm workers, civil groups, indigenous peoples — and said: "We will conduct the presidential survey. Give us the materials". I set the process in motion, and again I was told it was a crime, although there is freedom of movement in the

country. I led a march of 1,000 citizens to take back the electoral materials from the Honduran air force. When I arrived, I was reassured by the military, who told me: "Commander, you were elected by the people. We respect that. What can I do for you?" I said: "Return the survey materials". They said: "No problem". They let me in and gave me the material. I so informed the people, and within 24 hours, that which had required six months of planning had been distributed throughout the country.

On Saturday, 37 observer countries came to Honduras, including from the Organization of American States (OAS). Congress met and declared that OAS was not welcome — because it was there to observe the polling process — and neither were the 37 observers from the countries who arrived Saturday.

I met with the ambassadors from all over the world who were accredited in Honduras, and with the representatives of the 37 countries, on Saturday night. I was then on a television programme until 2 a.m., giving instructions on how the poll would proceed. There would be peace. There would be no violence. I practice non-violence. I am not a person who uses weapons. I have always opposed violence because of my personal convictions.

I was on television at 2 a.m. I left at 2 a.m., and went directly to speak to the people who were going to conduct the exit polls. They do an exit poll survey at 10 a.m., one at 2 p.m. and another at 4 p.m. I went to see how they were going to compile the results — first, the unofficial results, then, at 8 p.m., the final numbers of the preliminary results that would determine the trend of votes for and against.

What was the question on the slip of paper? The question was: "Do you wish to see a fourth ballot box used in the next elections?" In other words, it was to determine whether there would indeed be elections. In Honduras, the first ballot box is for the President, the second for mayors and the third for members of Parliament. The fourth was to be used for questions of national interest, such as citizen participation, through a possible constituent assembly, in the next Government, since the fourth ballot box would be used in the next elections. I will not be there for those elections. I will be leaving office, but I wish to leave behind a legacy of reform, to leave the people engaged in participation with full rights and, even more, to leave the people newly empowered by those rights.

Three and a half years ago, my election slogan was "empower citizens" — that is, how can we empower citizens and ensure their rights? Clearly, that can be done through more education, better health and more literacy programmes. That is how to achieve citizen empowerment, and the poll was for that purpose. The very first law that I adopted was to meet that objective.

I always made it perfectly clear that we could make up for the shortcomings in our democracy and the inequality in our laws by strengthening the participation of our citizens. When you have strong citizens, a strong civil society and people who are self-aware, the hierarchy that has always governed loses its power and justice begins to prevail. Of course, even the just will sin, given the chance. If you give them free rein, they will abuse their power. Give power to the people; do not be afraid of them. Popular participation was opposed in the French Revolution because they knew the people could not read or write and they thought, "How can such humble people govern when they cannot read or write? How can they govern?"

We made up our minds back then. We decided that the voice of the people is the voice of God and that it must be respected. If we do not believe that, then let us not speak of democracy. For heaven's sake, democracy is the people! All those who study this subject have come to the conclusion that people must go beyond merely electing representatives and must begin to truly participate in issues.

The question was: "Do you wish to see a fourth ballot box at the upcoming elections so that the people can be consulted?" The fourth ballot box was not for taking decisions, but for consulting the people on the possibility of establishing, a constitutional assembly in the next Government that would revise the constitutional framework and ensure open participation for the Honduran people, since people in Honduras are not allowed to participate directly in governance. The Constitution limits and prohibits such participation.

I had already explained the referendum to them. Some articles of the Constitution are set in stone and, according to legislators, cannot be altered. Of course, even stones can be transformed, but some people's minds are firmly closed to certain ideas. This question, therefore, did not create any new obligations for the State. If the people answered "yes", that would simply

make it an option to ask Congress to approve the fourth ballot box.

I explained all of this on television and radio broadcasts, speaking until 2 a.m., after meeting with the pollsters. I then left for home. It was almost 4 a.m. by the time I got home. I wished to be the first to vote — the first to offer my opinion, as they used to say — at 7 a.m., to launch, on national broadcasts, the opinion poll.

As a result of all this work, I slept very little, maybe an hour, until 5.15 a.m. I live in a middle-class house in the heart of Tegucigalpa, in a neighbourhood with many houses. My house is only 14-by-20 metres. It is a small house. It is where I have always lived and where I will always live. I have no other house in Tegucigalpa. I do have a ranch, since I come from a rural area. I own land there. I work the land. I have been a farmer and a cattle rancher there, but in Tegucigalpa, that house is all that I and my family own. So that is where I sleep. My house looks directly onto the street.

At about 5.15 a.m., still half-asleep, I began to hear shouts, blows, hammering against the front door below and terrified screams. I got up, still in my nightclothes. I went to the window, opened it and saw an entire battalion of hooded men, armed with rifles, pushing my guards into the street, tying them up and engaging them in hand-to-hand combat. These are moments I do not wish to remember, because it breaks my heart to see humanity regress.

I raised my eyes to heaven and asked the Lord, "What is this? Is this why you brought me into this world, to pit me against barbarity yet again?" I said — may the Lord forgive me — "Lord, you have betrayed me. What do you want from me?" I was staring down the barrel of the rifles.

That is when the machine gun fire began. They began to ring my doorbell and destroyed the locks on my front door. They overcame the 10 or 15 guards who protect me every day. They tied them up, subdued them and beat them. There were indeed people who were beaten, but they were taken away to the barracks, so no one knows how they are faring. They then began to break down the front door of my house.

The only ones in the house were my 21-year-old daughter, in another room, her maid, and the servants on the bottom floor. I ran downstairs immediately in my nightclothes. I went down the stairs and hid from the bullets, because bullets were flying all around me. I could hear shots fired — and these were loud shots, from large-calibre weapons. I hid behind one of the air conditioning units outside. Once the locks had given way and they broke down the door, they entered and they restrained me. I still had my mobile phone in my hand because I had been talking to reporters to see if they could denounce what was happening. I had a reporter on the air. They held me at gunpoint, with over eight heavy rifles pointed at me, including one at my face, held by men in balaclavas with only their eyes showing, in helmets, fully armed, in vests, with rifles, pistols and knives. With their guns trained on my chest and face, they said, "Drop that mobile phone or we will shoot! This is a military order. Drop the phone! Drop it or we will shoot you! Drop the phone!" They surrounded your humble servant.

One of them finally approached me and ripped the mobile phone from my hands. I said, "If you have been ordered to kill me, then shoot. I cannot stop you. Do it. If you have orders to assassinate me, do it now. Do not make me suffer any longer, just do it now". One of them grabbed my left arm, one my right, and they said "We are taking you away". They grabbed me and put me in a vehicle and, 15 minutes later, into an airplane. Forty-five minutes later, I was in Costa Rica. They opened the door of the airplane and dropped me at the airport in Costa Rica, still in my nightclothes. My daughter — I cannot talk about it or I will choke up from the pain and the anger.

President Óscar Arias went to the airport and attended to me personally. Costa Rica is a country where there are no coups d'état. It is a democratic country and perhaps the oldest democracy in the Americas, other than the United States, and it does not have an army. I began to receive telephone calls from many Presidents, as I mentioned earlier. But I wondered: Is this the democracy we are fighting for — this barbarity, this backsliding? Are we reverting to the age of the dictatorship?

In the 1980s I fought for the return of constitutional order to my country after the dictatorship. As of next year we will have had democracy for some 28 to 30 years. I fought for it because I was opposed to disappearances. In our country, there are hundreds of disappeared families that have yet to be found. There are mothers and orphans who are fighting to find the remains of their loved

ones, whose bodies have never been found. I fought dictatorships because dictatorships repress.

That is the case in Honduras today. Dictatorship and repression have been re-established in the country. I fought for the new system and the people supported it, but the elite rejected it. They live on that repression. As soon as they feel pressured, instead of trying to find a legal and correct path they resort to brute force. The country regresses and the State resumes its criminal behaviour. I am here first and foremost, to condemn those acts.

I do not want to be seen as a President who seeks to return to his country just to be President. In my view, the presidency is nothing more than a tool for life and the struggle on behalf of society, and to serve the people. It has no significance.

The Honduran poet, Alphonso Guillén Zelaya — with whom I share the same family name, as he is my ancestor — said that what counts in life is not to be a poet, an artist or a philosopher, it is to have the dignity, joy and the pride of one's labours and to do things well at any level as long as one feels satisfied by one's actions.

To be President is an important opportunity to be of service, but I demand that the rights I fought for be returned, because they are the tools that my children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and future generations, even if they are poor, will use to fight for their rights.

The Salvadoran poet Roque Dalton said that the world's problem is that laws are always enacted by the rich and powerful, and that is why there are so many poor. The poor do not participate. The day when the poor make the law is the day poverty will end and we will all live in better conditions.

We firmly condemn with all of our strength the acts that occurred in Honduras — but not because I am a President who was abducted and forcefully exiled from my country. If this becomes a precedent, one can only imagine how presidents elsewhere will feel, fearing that their armies might violently rise up against them if they say something or do something to which they are opposed.

There is not one single law in my country allowing for the ouster of a president. There has been no trial to condemn a president. A referendum should be held on the possibility of impeachment, and that is one of the reforms we had envisioned for the next Government. If a president fails he must go, but it is the people who should fire him, as I have asserted. They are the sole arbiters.

In my country, Congress cannot appoint a president. That would be aberrant. Congress may not appoint a deputy or mayor or senator. Only the people have that right. The Congress of the United States does not appoint the president. The president is elected by the people here. Your humble servant was elected by the people. The people, the dignity of Honduras, those of us who participate directly in decision-making, and I myself must be respected. We are mandated by the people, on behalf of the people, to serve and to aid the people.

Crimes must not go unpunished. I am a Christian and I always forgive and always pardon. I do not wish to look with hate upon anyone. I always forgive even those who have hurt me, but history, the people and the dignity of nations will not forgive the act of barbarism that occurred in our country and exposed us to the eyes of the world, and which has undermined the gains we achieved with such effort, love and care.

In the Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln said that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth". That is what we citizens of the twenty-first century desire. It is what the citizens of the world and all its countries have come here today to defend.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank everyone for their generous participation in this meeting with President Zelaya, who came here to address the General Assembly. I believe this has been a truly historic and important meeting.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 20.

The meeting rose at 2 p.m.